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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0352  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5502  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3172  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1375  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1348  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2336  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 4042  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 5019  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2616  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 3175  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 3030  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001930

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP  
NSC FOR E.PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/2018

TAGS: PGOV KDEM ID

SUBJECT: INDONESIAN LEGISLATURE DEBATES KEY LAW FOR  
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

REF: JAKARTA 450

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: The Indonesian legislature (DPR) is set to debate a key election law next week. In a Byzantine complexity of the Indonesian system, the law will determine the minimum percentage of support needed in Parliament in order for a presidential candidate to be formally nominated and placed on the ballot. Current legislation requires 15 percent or more support in the legislature for a nomination. There is a tug of war going on among the political parties as to what the exact percentage should be, with each jockeying for advantage ahead of the July 2009 presidential elections.  
END SUMMARY.

AN IMPORTANT BILL

¶12. (SBU) The Indonesian national legislature is debating a key electoral bill. The bill would determine the threshold of support needed in the legislature in order to nominate a presidential candidate. Several options are being considered to determine the threshold: a minimum percentage of DPR seats held by a party or a coalition; a percentage of total national votes received in the April 2009 legislative elections; or a combination of both. In the 2004 elections, the only threshold for nomination was 15 percent of the seats in Parliament.

POLITICAL JOCKEYING

¶13. (C) As the run up to the April 9 legislative elections intensifies, parties are jockeying for what they consider their best options. Setting the minimum threshold is contentious because Golkar (Vice President Jusuf Kalla's party) and PDI-P (opposition candidate Megawati Sukarnoputri's party) prefer setting the percentage at 25-30% while smaller parties prefer a 15-20% threshold.

¶14. (C) There are additional and also somewhat abstruse

matters under discussion. The two large parties are supporting proposals that would further disadvantage the smaller parties. Some of the smaller parties can be expected to do well in a few provinces but not nationally. However, parties that get less than 2.5 percent of the national vote in Parliamentary elections are not allowed to seat anyone in the DPR. For example, a party which wins big in only one district but gets less than 2.5 percent of the national vote will not be allowed to seat its winners in the DPR.

#### NEXT STEPS IN PROCESS

¶15. (U) The DPR is slated to vote on this matter soon, perhaps on October 22. Golkar, the largest party, with 128 seats, and PDI-P, with 109 seats, seem set to have the upper hand in the upcoming vote. That said, there are many smaller parties and their voice cannot be discounted. Some observers believe that there will be a compromise with the threshold limit rising to 20 percent, but not higher. If this is the case, this would mean there would be room for 4-5 candidates to be formally nominated and take part in next year's presidential elections.

¶16. (C) PDI-P would benefit from a high threshold as the second largest party with a strong presidential candidate, Megawati. The vote will also be key for President Yudhoyono. Because his party, Partai Demokrat, is relatively small, he benefits from a lower threshold. If a higher threshold is agreed to, however, he will probably have to align with Golkar once again, though there are other options. Almost all observers believe that the President will be nominated next year, but that he will have to work hard and make compromises in order to pick up the requisite support.

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